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ABSTRACT

Provided in the manual are organizational guidelines and suggested activities for a Special Evants segment of the Mississippi Special Olympics Program to encourage participation by low motor functioning, multihandicapped, mentally retarded persons. Information is provided concerning objectives, organizational set-up, guidelines, communication schedule, local meet activities, division breakdowns, state meet plans, the role of volunteers, and parallel activities (additional activities held between regularly scheduled events). Described in terms of participants, necessary equipment and materials, special adaptations, and organizational rules are the following recommended events: the dash, wheelchair race, crutch race, crawling races, softball throw, and standing long jump. Also included is a diagram of the lay-out of the field, suggestions for year-round training, and a sample entry form. (Author/LH)

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MISSISSIPPI SPECIAL OLYMPICS

SPECIAL EVENTS MANUAL

April 1974

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The University of Southern Mississippi School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation

The Mississippi Governor's Office

The Mississippi State Department of Education (Special Education Office)

The Mississippi Jaycees

The Mississippi Association for Retarded Children

Mississippi Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation

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FORWARD

The Mississippi Special Olympics Program stated as one of its primary goals for 1972-73 the involvement of more trainable retardates and extremely low motor (ELM) functioning retardates. Therefore the development of a "special events" category, under the direction of Mrs. Toni Heinze, became an integral part of the 1973 program and state games.

There are many unanswered questions, and this phase of the program is quite flexible and most likely will be modified in a number of ways. Mrs. Shriver (in attendance at the Mississippi State Games) raised the question of awards. Do we need a different medal for 'special events' or should we award these participants in the same manner as the 'official event'?

The State Directors, at the 1973 Annual State Directors' Conference for Special Olympics Incorporated in Ogunquit, Maine, unanimously endorsed the inclusion of the multihandicapped mentally retarded and suggested the official Special Olympics medals be awarded. Also it was recommended that official events be developed for the multihandicapped retardate for the 1975 National Special Olympics Games.

This brief paper is intended to be an overview of the events included, problems encountered and possible suggestions

that have evolved out of the development of the 'special events' in the Mississippi Special Olympics Program.

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OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the Special Olympics is to initiate, reinforce, and encourage motor development in the retarded, as well as to provide an opportunity for those individuals to experience participation--and where possible--success in competitive activities, thereby being rewarded for their efforts. The primary purpose of the 'special events' was to extend this opportunity for competition and a chance of reward, through the awards system, for the extremely low motor (ELM) functioning and multihandicapped retarded. It was also hoped that 'special events' would promote or stimulate continuous motor development programs in which these severely handicapped retarded were involved. To these individuals who are even less likely to develop their motor skills on their own, and who have even fewer avenues through which to feel success and gain recognition, the Special Olympics offered an especially important and valuable experience.

COMMUNICATION SCHEDULE FOLLOWED BY
MISSISSIPPI SPECIAL OLYMPICS "SPECIAL EVENTS" COORDINATOR

Fall

Fall Planning Clinic - discuss events, adaptations.
Initial contact with places where multihandicapped MR are located (public schools, institutions, hospital schools, private and agency operated programs), visit as many as possible in person.

Winter

Ongoing contact with places where multihandicapped are located for discussion of particular events of which participants are capable, any adaptations or suggestions for training program (also obtain any necessary training materials so participants are familiar with them).
Maintain ongoing communication with Special Olympics officials in charge of planning local and state meets to insure that multihandicapped MR are being included in plans (medical releases, events forms, scheduling of Special Events within Special Olympics program at the State Meet, choosing advantageous location for seating, arrangements for receiving awards at the State Meet, arrangements for volunteers, etc.)

Spring

Attend area director's meetings for areas which will include multihandicapped MR--review events, transportation arrangements, make note of special medical needs, etc.
Attend local meets for those areas which are including multihandicapped MR--note performance ranges, if organization is the same as it will be at the State Meet, talk to teachers and participants for more realistic idea of needs at the State Meet see "Local Meet", p. 6
Arrange local meets for places such as institutions, hospital schools, etc. that have not participated in area local meets.
Arrange area group meetings to discuss any problems with teachers, etc.
Attend executive committee meeting.
Contact news media--local newspaper, arrange to have attend a local meet where multihandicapped MR are participating.
Attend a scratch meeting the evening before the State Meet.

Key People

State Director

Events Chairman

State Games Director

Area Directors

Teachers and Administrators of multihandicapped MR including directors of institutions and hospital schools.

Events Programmer

Data Gatherers

Volunteer Assistants

Newspaper

Special Events Coordinator's Special Assistant

THINGS TO DO AT THE LOCAL MEET

Attending the local meets at which the multihandicapped are participating was the primary means of gaining additional vital information about the participants' abilities and personalities. Several responsibilities of the coordinator at these local meets were:

a. Gather information for establishing division breakdowns, note the range of abilities.

b. Notice possible organizational difficulties.

c. Discover special materials, facilities, area, etc. which may be needed.

d. Become familiar with the participants, their teachers, special forms of communication that are especially effective.

e. Consider how Special Events will fit into the established pattern of events in the overall Special Olympics.

f. Make sure participants are familiar with materials and procedures which will be used at the State Meet. Emphasize their use in daily training and preparation.

DIVISION BREAKDOWNS

Divisions were established similar to those for the general Special Olympics. However, since Special Events involved a relatively small number of participants (approximately 60), and since these varied greatly as to age and performance ability, breakdowns within broader age ranges were found to be more practical. After the participants were observed at their local meets, the following division breakdown was established.

Event: Softball Throw, etc.

Under 8	8-16	17 and over
Division I	Division I	Division I
Division II	Division II	Division II
etc.	etc.	etc.

ADDITIONAL PLANS FOR THE STATE MEET

In addition to following the spring schedule (Communication) several additional considerations were very necessary. These included:

a. Many of the events in which multihandicapped retarded were able to participate coincided with the general olympics events, therefore, these multihandicapped participated at age breaks or at event transitions of the regular Special Olympics.*

b. The multihandicapped retarded received their awards with the general participating population in most cases.*

c. An advantageous area was chosen for seating--this took into consideration availability of appropriate washrooms, first aid, shade, preferably a flat grassy area with seating not requiring climbing, proximity to the locations of the events (main field for most events, flat pavement or street for wheelchair and crutch races, etc.).

d. Volunteers' jobs were well-planned ahead of time.

e. A variety of parallel activities were planned which would take place in the seating area, be ongoing throughout the day and would provide alternatives to the participants between Olympics events.

f. Transportation was planned for all materials that were needed (mats, ropes, weighted stakes, football dummies, materials for parallel games); everything was set up before participants began to arrive.

g. It was assured that all participants had transportation to and from the State Meet (this was usually taken care of by sponsoring agencies or schools).

h. The coordinator attended the scratch meet the evening before the state meet to check on entries, any last minute changes, assure agreement on any special rules which would be followed.

*These two aspects required efficient communication with staging areas and the nerve center.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers made the Special Olympics possible. They played a very important role in Special Events. Many of these participants required assistance in simple mobility and self-help, so adequate assistance had to be provided. It was very beneficial to have familiar teachers, workers, and parents close at hand especially as the participants entered their events.

Jobs that kept Mississippi volunteers busy at the State Meet included:

1. Registration
2. Getting the participants to the seating area
3. Help with washroom needs (especially those who were visually handicapped-MR and physically handicapped MR)
4. Getting participants to individual events
5. Assisting with the events
6. Keeping track of the general Olympics activities for the most advantageous joining-in point
7. Getting participants to the awards area
8. Maintaining the parallel games and activities
9. Lunch procedure
10. Maintaining communication with and transporting results to the "nerve" center

PARALLEL ACTIVITIES

Just as the average participant at the Special Olympics had the choice of getting involved with the sports clinics and other varied activities between events, so did the multihandicapped retarded participants. Whenever possible they were encouraged to take advantage of these activities. However, the majority of multihandicapped retarded participants were found grouped together rather than scattered throughout the area--this for several main reasons:

1. Mobility was limited and required much individual assistance, thereby making continuous "rounding up" of large numbers very difficult and confusing.
2. Some Special Events required additional space adjacent to the main field (wheelchair races, crawling races) and therefore having the participants together in these areas or for movement to them was more efficient.
3. Multihandicapped participants themselves traveled and arrived at the games in groups (for example, many came from institutions, hospital schools, etc.).

Since these participants were together in a group, and since some were not able to participate in the general sports clinics, it was found to be more practical to provide additional activities for them in their own seating area. Following are some of the parallel games that were provided and the materials which were used.

Activities	Materials
Mat games	mat used for crawling races
basketball	hoop on pole at 3-4 ft. height, for wheelchair participants, ball

Activities	Materials
tetherball	horizontal bar at 7 feet with ball attached with rope
modified "twister"	large, brightly colored shapes attached with tape to one area of the mats
obstacle course	mats or grassy area, variety of large, stable objects such as football dummies, tires
hiding games (severely handicapped)	buckets of sand, flour, thawed "frozen bread dough", small objects, tokens to be hid in buckets

In addition to the above games, many children and adults enjoyed relaxing between events and watching the other participants compete.

The parallel games were chosen not only for their recreational factors but also because of their use as tools for improving the motor abilities of the multihandicapped retarded participants. As in all other areas of Special Olympics, many volunteers were needed, especially in assisting the multihandicapped retarded back and forth from events to the seating area, as well as in maintaining the parallel games. In addition to the high school and college volunteers, many teachers and parents who had come with the participants worked with them on the various motor activities between events.

APPROPRIATE EVENTS FOR THE MULTIHANDICAPPED RETARDED

Some special factors considered in choosing and setting up individual events included:

a. the abilities and limitations placed on the individual by the type and degree of handicap (for example: a totally blind-retarded person might run a 30 yard dash while a person in a wheelchair participates in a 30 yard wheelchair race, and both individuals may be able to throw a softball quite successfully; a crawling race would be more appropriate for a more severely motorically-handicapped-retarded person; medical cautions also had to be considered as well as physical stamina).

b. the feasibility of a training or practice program for specific events.

c. the presence of the element of competition, although the primary objective was to encourage the individual to work on improving his strength and mobility through daily programming.

Talking with teachers and other workers involved with the multihandicapped provided much help in determining appropriate events.

Activities which worked very successfully at the Mississipp: Special Olympics are listed below. Also included are any special adaptations which were found to be necessary, materials needed, and organizational rules which were found.

I. The Dash

A. Participants included
   1. mentally retarded - visually handicapped
   2. mentally retarded and mildly physically handicapped
   3. mentally and deaf-blind
   4. ages ranged from 8-57

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B. Equipment included
   1. a straight dirt or grass stretch for running
   2. lengths of ski rope to be used for guidelines for the blind (one for each lane)
   3. plastic tubing used to hold golf clubs--in this case cut in half-lengths and placed on ski rope (projects runners' hands and facilitates faster movement)
   4. heavily weighted stakes to which rope is fastened as just-above-waist height (2 for each lane)
   5. catchers at end of each lane
   6. volunteers as precautionary measure to hold weighted stakes two for each lane
   7. tape or ribbon markers on rope to designate finish line since participants continued to catchers
   8. brightly colored lane markings on ground for partially-sighted-MR and for mildly physically handicapped-MR participants
   9. Stop watches (one for each lane)

C. Special considerations included
   1. a 30 yard dash was run for the visually handicapped-MR and the physically handicapped MR; a 15 yard dash was run for the deaf blind MR (tape or ribbon marked these lengths on the guideropes or on the ground)
   2. a physical signal was used coinciding with the gun especially for the deaf-blind MR participants
   3. since the deaf-blind MR participants required additional guidance, it was established that an assistant could travel in front of or alongside the participant but could not touch him.
   4. the dash was run immediately after the wheelchair and crutch races--this enabled the catchers and holders of the rope guidelines to return from the street to the field, set up the ropes on the weighted stakes, and take their positions as catchers and at both ends of each lane.

D. Layout of the dash - see diagram page 19

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II. Wheelchair race - 30 yards

A. Participants included
   1. Physically handicapped-mentally retarded who move by use of a wheelchair
   2. Includes those who travel forward by use of hands, and those who travel backward by use of feet

B. Equipment needed
   1. a straight, flat stretch of smooth pavement (at MSO, a nearby section of street was closed off)
   2. lengths of ski rope to be held at waist height by volunteers and to serve as direction guides, especially for those participants traveling backward (this can be the same ski rope used for the visually-handicapped MR dash)
   3. catchers
   4. volunteers to hold guide ropes (2 for each lane)
   5. stopwatches (one for each lane)

C. Special considerations
   1. wheelchair race was run prior to the dash so as to enable use of the ski rope for lane guides before securing it to the weighted stakes as guides for the dash.

2. lanes were approximately six feet wide to allow for veering.
3. assistants were allowed to travel behind or alongside participants but were not to touch them unless an accident took place

D. Layout of the street - see diagram, page 19

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III. Crutch race - 30 yards

A. Participants included those mentally retarded-physically handicapped who move with the aid of crutches.

B. Equipment included
1. same straight, flat stretch of pavement used for wheelchair race
2. same rope guidelines used for wheelchair race were used as guides for crutch race
3. catchers and volunteers as in wheelchair race
4. stopwatches (one for each lane)

C. Special considerations included
1. the crutch race was run immediately after the wheelchair race while the street was still set up and volunteers were still available to hold guidelines and act as catchers

D. Layout same as wheelchair race, see diagram, page 19

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IV. Crawling races - approximately 10 feet

A. Participants included
1. Those physically handicapped MR whose method of independent movement is crawling
2. This included those who crawled with arms and legs, and those who pulled themselves by their arms alone

B. Equipment included
1. good mats (gymnastic or tumbling) which are long enough to permit the participant to begin and finish his race on the mat
2. tape to mark off a finish lane on the mats
3. brightly colored toys or candy which was used as an incentive for the very severely multihandicapped
4. 2 stopwatches

C. Special considerations included
1. participants had to be removed from wheelchairs and placed in position on the mats
2. two participants crawled simultaneously, matched as closely as possible for ability
3. assistants were allowed on the mats in front of and behind the participants to encourage them, but were not to touch them

D. Layout on field - see diagram, page 19

V. Softball throw

A. Participants included
1. mentally retarded-visually handicapped
2. mentally retarded-physically handicapped, both those in wheelchairs and those who could stand independently with or without crutches, braces, etc.
3. mentally retarded-deaf-blind

B. Equipment included
1. regulation softball
2. same as used for general Special Olympics
3. same recorders as used for regular event
4. volunteers to get participants to specified area

C. Special considerations included
1. the softball throw for multihandicapped was scheduled to follow immediately after regular participants had thrown while balls, recorders, and area was still available and set up.

D. Layout on field - see diagram, page 19

VI. Standing long jump

A. Participants included
1. mentally retarded-visually handicapped
2. mentally retarded-mildly physically handicapped
3. mentally retarded-deaf-blind

B. Equipment included
1. mats
2. recorder

C. Special considerations included
1. this event was also scheduled to coincide with the regular participants in the general Special Olympics.

D. Layout on the field - see diagram, page 19

No limit was set on the number of events in which a person could participate unless a medical problem limited physical activity.

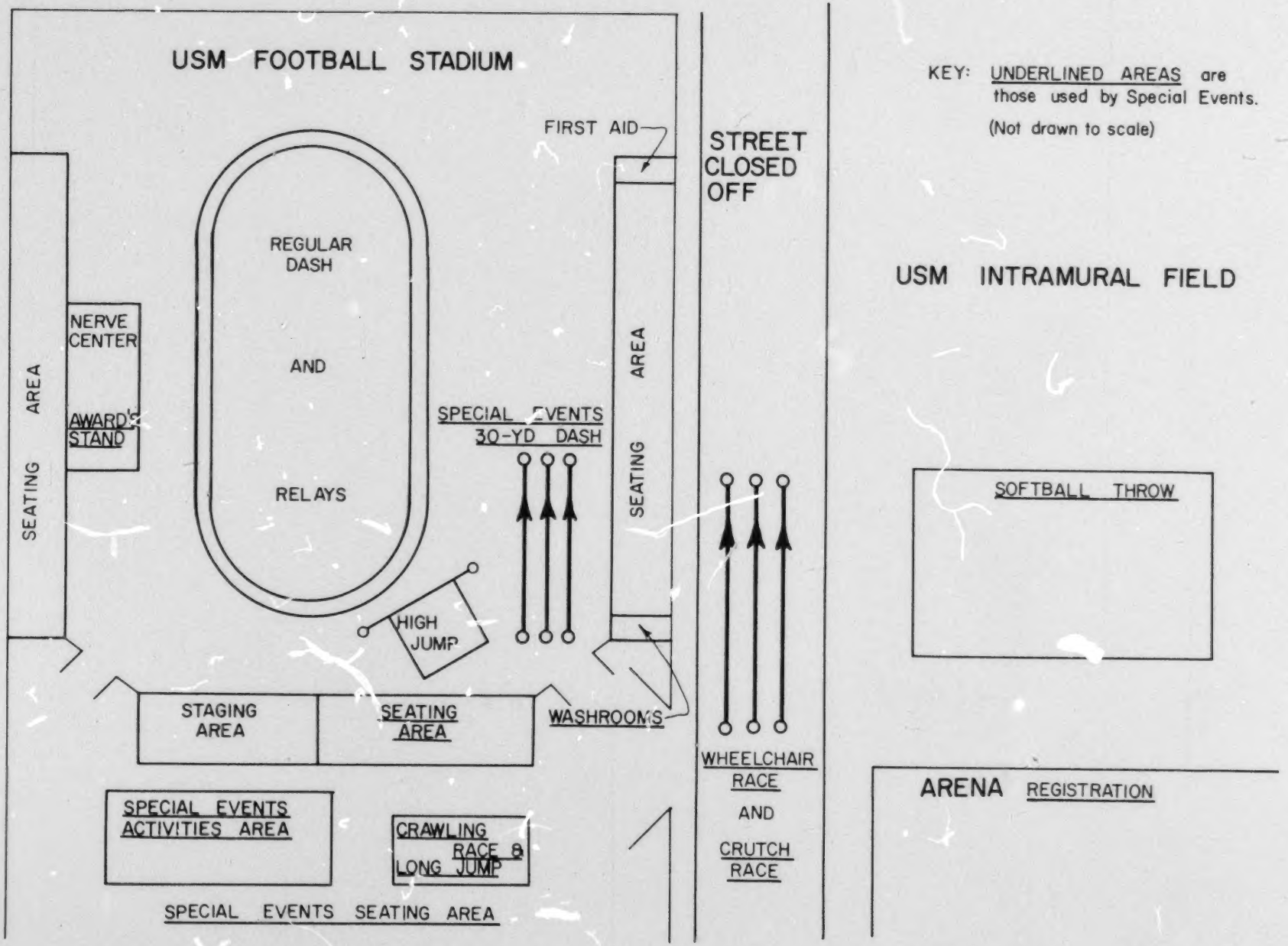
Additional rules which applied to the events in general included:

1. In all races, the participants continued running to the catchers. Guidelines, ground surfaces exceeded the official distance of the races, but were marked at these designated points with tape or ribbon.

2. When a Special Event was being run at the same time as another Olympic event, but in a different area, the Special Event used a whistle instead of a gun so as not to confuse either group of participants. Otherwise, a gun was used for Special Events too.

3. Directions and signals were individually demonstrated to participants before an event if they in any way differed from the established pattern (e.g. use of whistles).

4. Whenever possible, traveling surfaces, materials, directions were established prior to the local meets, confirmed at the local meets, and maintained at the State Meet so as not to penalize any participants by last minute changes.


USM FOOTBALL STADIUM
FIRST AID
STREET CLOSED OFF
REGULAR DASH
AND
RELAYS
NERVE CENTER
AWARDS STAND
SEATING AREA
SEATING AREA
SPECIAL EVENTS 30-YD DASH
HIGH JUMP
STAGING AREA
SEATING AREA
WASHROOMS
WHEELCHAIR RACE
AND
CRUTCH RACE
SPECIAL EVENTS ACTIVITIES AREA
CRAWLING RACE & LONG JUMP
SPECIAL EVENTS SEATING AREA
KEY: UNDERLINED AREAS are those used by Special Events.
(Not drawn to scale)
USM INTRAMURAL FIELD
SOFTBALL THROW
ARENA
REGISTRATION

YEAR AROUND TRAINING

Hopefully, training will take place in a year-round motor skills program with the Special Olympics being a culminating and reinforcing activity. However, Special Olympics also often serves as a catalyst for initiating this type of activity. In either case, the training program is of great importance to the multihandicapped retarded person. He is even less likely to develop his motor skills on his own, and has even fewer avenues through which to feel success and gain recognition.

In general, the Special Olympics training program suggestions were followed. However, different multiple handicaps necessitated variations in

a. skills to be taught (e.g. manipulation of a wheelchair)

b. the manner in which skills are taught (e.g. providing auditory reinforcement for the visually-handicapped retarded person learning to throw straight ahead, or learning to run with the use of a guide rope).

In all cases, it was emphasized that teachers use the materials, traveling surfaces, and directions which would be used in the actual events so as not to penalize the participant by last minute changes.

It is presently planned that the Mississippi Special Olympics program will gather appropriate training suggestions for the development of motor skills in the multihandicapped based on experiences in their year around training program.

SUMMARY

The idea for the Mississippi Special Olympics Special Events developed from a concern for extending the advantages and opportunities of the Special Olympics program to more of the mentally retarded population--those who in addition to being retarded are also extremely low motor functioning or multihandicapped. It was believed that not only the participation in the annual programs but also the implications and carry-over in daily motor development and training would have great value to these persons.

In no way did the Special Events take priority to the already established Special Olympics program. Rather it was designed as an extension of this program enabling even more retarded persons to participate. Many of the events were run jointly with the main Olympics program, while a few, such as the wheelchair race, were necessarily run separately but within close proximity and scheduling of the main events. Major organizational rules of the Special Olympics program were followed, with adaptations in execution taking place only when necessary.

The foregoing outline is not intended as having all the answers. Instead, it is offered as the organizational set-up, guidelines, and primary considerations that made the 1973 Mississippi Special Olympics Special Events successful. It

is hoped that these guidelines will aid others in including more of the retarded who are extremely low motor functioning or multihandicapped in the Special Olympics Program.

MISSISSIPPI SPECIAL OLYMPICS ENTRY FORM

SPECIAL EVENTS

NAME OF CHILD _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____ AGE _____ SEX _____

SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION _____

DIVISION OR DEPARTMENT _____

STREET ADDRESS OF SCHOOL _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____ CHAPERONE _____

Check any handicaps additional to mental retardation:

_____ visually-handicapped MR
_____ hearing-handicapped MR
_____ Physically-handicapped MR
_____ deaf-blind MR
_____ extremely low motor MR
_____ other, please specify _____

Any special precautions necessary? _____

** Special Olympics Parents' and Medical Release Forms must be attached. Both are mandatory for all competitors.

EVENTS	FOR AREA MEET (best performance before area meet)	FOR STATE GAMES (area meet results)	check state events entered
30 yard dash	____min.____sec.	____min.____sec.	____
15 yard dash	____min.____sec.	____min.____sec.	____
30 yard wheelchair race	____min.____sec.	____min.____sec.	____
30 yard crutch race	____min.____sec.	____min.____sec.	____
3 yard or 5 yard crawling-scooting race	____min.____sec.	____min.____sec.	____
softball	_____ft	_____ft.	____
standing long jump	____ft. ____in.	____ft. ____in.	____
tumbling	_____	_____	____
other _____	_____	_____	____
VERIFIED BY	_____	_____	